ONLY A MONTH;

OR, A CURIOUS MYSTERY EXPLAINED.

CHAPTER VIII.—(Cont'd.)

"Not at all. I shall take a walk before going to the office. I tell you what, Sigrid, you shall come with me and get a new English story at Beyer's, to cheer you in Frithiof's absence. What was the novel some one told you gave the best description of English home life?"

"'Wives and Daughters,'" said Sigrid.

"Well, let us get it, then, and afterward we will take a turn above Walkendorf's Tower, and see if there is any sign of our vessels from Iceland."

"You heard good news of them last month, did you not?" asked Sigrid.

"No definite news, but everything was very hopeful. They sent word by the steamer to Granton, and telegraphed from there to our station in Oifjord."

"What did they say?"

"That as yet there had been no catch of herrings, but that everything was most promising, as plenty of whales were seen every day at the mouth of the fjord. Oh, I am perfectly satisfied. I have had no anxiety about the expedition since then." So father and daughter set out together. Beyer's shop had fascinations for them both; she lingered long in the neighborhood of the Tauchintz shelves, while Herr Falck discussed the news with some one behind the counter, and admired the pictures temptingly displayed.

"Look here, Sigrid!" he exclaimed. "Did you ever see a prettier little water-color than that? Bergin in winter, from the harbor. What is the price of it? A hundred kroner? I must really have it. It shall be a present to you in memory of our walk."

Sigrid was delighted with the picture. They walked away together, planning where it should hang at home, and saying how it was just the sort of thing Frithiof would like.

"It is quite a pity we did not see it when he was away in Germany, he would have liked to have it when he was suffering from heimweh," said Sigrid.

"Well, all that sort of thing is over for him, I hope," said Herr Falck. "No need that he should be away from Bergen any more, except now and then for a holiday. And if ever you marry a foreigner, Sigrid, you will be able to take Bergen with you as a consolation."

They made their way up to a little wooded hill above the fortress, which commanded a wide and beautiful view.

"Ah!" cried Herr Falck. "Look there, Sigrid! Look, look! there is surely a vessel coming."

She gazed out seaward.

"You have better eyes than I have, father. Whereabouts? Oh, yes, now I see, ever so far away. Do you think it is one of yours?"

"I can't tell yet," said Herr Falck; and glancing at him she saw that he was in an agony of impatience, and that the old, troubled look had come back to his face.

Again the nameless fear which had seized her in the summer took possession of her.

"Yes, yes," cried Herr Falck at length, "I am almost sure it is one of our Oifjord vessels. Yes; I am certain it is the 'Solid.' Now the great question is this; is she loaded or only ballasted?"

"I think she is rather low in the water, father, don't you?"

"I hope so; I hope so," said Herr Falck.

The ship was drawing nearer and nearer, and every moment Sigrid realized more that it was not as she had first hoped. She glanced apprehensively at her father.

"I can't bear this any longer, Sigrid," he exclaimed. "We will do down to Tydskebryggen, and take a boat and row out to her."

They hurried away, speaking never a word. As they threaded their way through the busy harbor, she began to feel a little more cheerful.

"We must hope for the best," said Herr Falck.

Just as they neared the "Solid" the anchor dropped.

"You had better wait here," said Herr Falck, "while I go on board. I'll not keep you long, dear."

Nevertheless, anxious waiting always does seem long, and Sigrid, spite of her sealskin jacket, shivered as she sat in the little boat.

When her father rejoined her, her worst fears were realized. He neither looked at her nor spoke to her, but, just giving a word of direction to the boatman, sat down in his place with folded arms and bent head. She knew instantly that some terrible disaster must have happened, but she did not dare to ask what it was, she just sat still listening to the monotonous stroke of the oars, and with an uneasy wonder in her mind as to what would happen next. They were nearing the shore, and at last her father spoke.

"Pay the man, Sigrid," he said, and with an unsteady hand he gave her his purse. They walked away together in the direction of the office.

"You must not be too anxious, dear child," he said. "I will explain all to you this evening. I have had a heavy loss."

"But, little father, you look so ill," pleaded Sigrid. "Must you indeed go to the office? Why not come home and rest?"

"Rest?" said Herr Falck, dreamily. "Rest? Not, not just yet—not just yet. Send the carriage for me this afternoon, and say nothing about it to any one; I'll explain it to you later on."

So the father and daughter parted, and Sigrid went home to bear as best she could her day of suspense. Herr Falck returned later on, looking very ill and complaining of headache. She persuaded him to lie down in his study, and would not ask him the question which was trembling on her lips. But in the evening he spoke to her.

"You are a good child, Sigrid, a good child," he said, caressing her hand. "And now you must hear all, though I would give much to keep it from you. The Iceland expedition has failed, dear; the vessels have come back empty."

"Does it mean such a very great loss to you, father?" she asked.

"I will explain to you," he said more eagerly; "I should like you to understand how it has come about. For some time trade has been very bad, and last year and the year before I had some heavy losses connected with the Lofoten part of the business."

He seemed to take almost a pleasure in giving her all sorts of details which she could not half understand; she heard in a confused way of the three steamers sent to Nordland in the summer with empty barrels and salt for the herrings; she heard about buying at the Bourse of Bergen large quantities, so that Herr Falck had ten thousand barrels at a time, and had been obliged to realize them at ruinous prices.

"You do not understand all this, my Sigrid," he said, smiling at her puzzled face. "Well, I'll tell you the rest more simply. Things were looking as bad as possible, and when in the summer I heard that Haugesund had caught thousands of barrels of herrings in the fjords of Iceland, I made up my mind to try the same plan, and to stake all on that last throw. I chartered sailing vessels, hired hands, bought nets, and the expedition set off; I knew that if it came back with full barrels I should be a rich man, and that if it failed, there was no help for it; my business must go to pieces."

Sigrid gave a little cry. "You will be bankrupt!" she exclaimed. "Oh, surely not that, father — not that!"

"There is yet one hope," said Herr Falck. "If the rumor I heard in the summer is false, and if I can still keep the connection with Morgans, that guarantees me 7,200 kroner a year, in that case I have no doubt we could avoid open bankruptcy."

"But how?" said Sigrid. "I don't understand."

"The Morgans would never keep me as their agent if I were declared a bankrupt, and, to avoid that, I think my creditors would accept as payment the outcome of all my property, and would give me what we call voluntary agreement; it is a form of winding up a failing concern which is very often employed. They would be the gainers in the long run, because of course they would not allow me to keep my 7,200 kroner untouched, so in any case, my child, I have brought you to poverty."

He covered his face with his hands. Sigrid put her arm about him, kissing his hair, his hands, his forehead.

"I do not mind poverty, little father; I mind only that you are so troubled," she said. "And surely, surely they will not take the agency from you after all these years! Oh, poverty will be nothing, if only we can keep from disgrace—if only others need not be dragged down too!"

They were interrupted by a tap at the door, and Swanhild stole in, making the pretty little courtesy without which no well-bred Norwegian child enters or leaves a room.

"Mayn't I come and say good-night to you, little father?" she asked. "I got on ever so well at school, just as you said, after our merry breakfast."

The sight of the child's unconscious happiness was more than he could endure; he closed his eyes that she might not see the scalding tears which filled them.

"How dreadfully ill father looks," said Swanhild, uneasily.

"His head is very bad," said Sigrid. "Kiss him, dear, and then run to bed."

But Herr Falck roused himself.

"I too will go up," he said. "Bed is the best place, eh, Swanhild? God bless you, little one; good-night. What, are you going to be my walking-stick?"

And thus, steadying himself by the child, he went up to his room.

At breakfast the next morning he was in his place as usual, but he seemed very poorly. About eleven o'clock there was a ring at the door-bell; the servant brought in a telegram for Herr Falck. A sort of wild hope seized her that it might be from Frithiof. He rose from the sofa as she entered.

"I am better, Sigrid," he said. "I think I could go to the office. Ah! a telegram for me?"

"It has come this minute," she said, watching him as he sat down before his desk.

"How extravagant that boy is!" she thought to herself. "Why, it would have been enough if he had just put 'All right.'"

Then a sudden cry broke from her, for her father had bowed his head on his desk like a man who is overwhelmed.

"Father, father!" she cried, "oh! what is the matter?"

For a minute or two he neither spoke nor moved. At last, with an effort, he raised himself. He looked up at her with a face of fixed despair, with eyes whose anguish wrung her heart.

"Sigrid," he said, in a voice unlike his own, "they have taken the agency from me. I am bankrupt!"

She put her hand in his, too much stunned to speak.

"Poor children!" he moaned. "Ah! my God! my God! Why—"

The sentence was never ended. He fell heavily forward; whether he was dead or only fainting she could not tell.

She rushed to the door calling for help, and the servants came hurrying to the study. They helped to move their master to the sofa, and Sigrid found a sort of comfort in the assurances of her old nurse that it was nothing but a paralytic seizure, that he would soon revive.

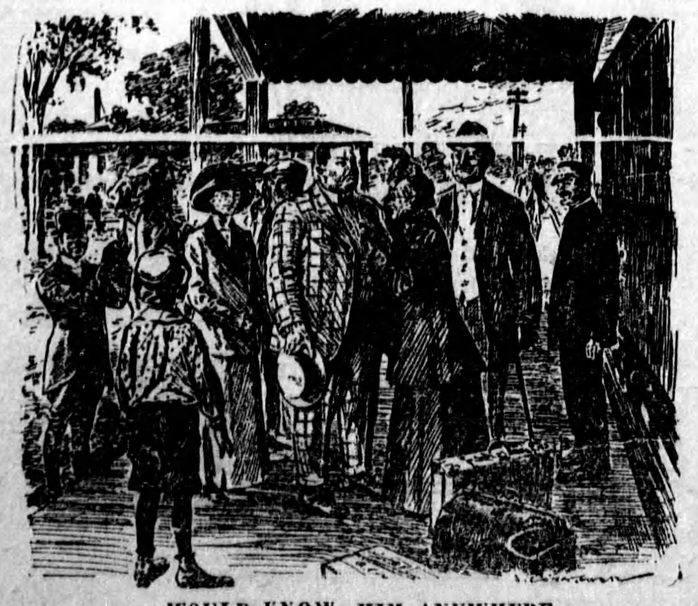
"I will send Olga for the doctor," she said, breathlessly.

"Ay, and for your uncle, too," said the nurse. "He's your own mother's brother, and ought to be here."

"Perhaps," said Sigrid, hesitatingly. "Yes, Olga, go to Herr Gronvold's house and just tell them of my father's illness. But first for the doctor—as quick as you can."

Thus they waited till the doctor came. He was an old friend, and Sigrid felt almost at rest when she had told him all he wanted to know as to the beginning of the attack and the cause.

(To be continued.)



WOULD KNOW HIM ANYWHERE.

Visitor—"And so this is little Willie, whom I haven't seen since the night he was born. But I'd know you anywhere, my dear, by your voice."—Judge.

AT A COURT PRESENTATION

A SOCIETY LADY DESCRIBES THE CEREMONY.

How It Was Conducted in the Latter Days of Queen Victoria's Reign.

A visit to a relative who was busy with preparations for the forthcoming Court to which she is commanded, reminded me vividly of my early impressions of a Drawing Room.

I first made my bow to Royalty during the latter days of Queen Victoria's reign, when Courts were held at the unbecoming hour of three o'clock.

On my first appearance at Court I dressed very simply in a white satin gown and train, and wore no jewels. I had the advantage of the private entry. The fortunate few entitled to this privilege are members of the Corps Diplomatique, foreigners of distinction and members of the Household.

They have the right to drive into the courtyard by a separate entrance reserved exclusively for their benefit, and, once inside the Palace, they meet in a room adjoining the Throne Room, where all crush is avoided, and pass first the Royal presence, while their less fortunate friends wait their turn behind a roped-off barrier.

MY FRIEND THE PAGE.

Judging from personal experience, if a girl has any natural grace she had far better trust to that to carry her successfully through the ordeal of presentation than to take lessons from one of the many professors of deportment, who advertise their ability to instruct in matters of Court etiquette.

A little relative of mine, aged fourteen, who was acting as Page of Honor to Queen Victoria at the time, standing erect behind her Majesty, smiled encouragingly at me as I curtseyed, and I could scarcely refrain from laughing, as we had so often rehearsed this scene in private.

My little friend the Page fully appreciated the importance of his position, as his attendance at Court, for which he received—as do the four Pages-in-Waiting—£230 a year, entitled him to a whole day's leave from school on the State occasions to which he was commanded.

Formerly a post of Page of Honor meant a nomination to one of the regiments of Guards, then a costly affair. In the present day this distinction is given to the sons of parents personally known to the King and Queen, at a stipend of £230 a year, and no other privilege is granted. A boy's duty ends when he attains the age of sixteen and a half years, and he is free to choose his own profession.

Presentation at Court in the days of Queen Victoria generally concluded by five o'clock in the afternoon, when the debutante and her mother returned home to receive friends and show off their finery.

WHAT A STATE BALL IS LIKE.

A command to a State ball followed my presentation at Court, and to this I looked forward with the greatest pleasure. When the great night arrived, I dressed myself with more than customary care, and, when my toilette was complete, left home to call for my mother, who was dining out, and accompany her to Buckingham Palace.

The ball begins at eleven o'clock, but guests arrive before that hour and stand in line to watch the Royal procession enter the ball-room, preceded by the Gold Stick, who walks backwards.

To be invited and dance in a Royal quadrille is considered a much-coveted honor, but to me it was a doubtful pleasure, as, although I did not disgrace myself, my whole thoughts were so busily employed in remembering my steps, and in endeavoring to copy others, that I had no time to enjoy myself or converse with my partner.

The latter, I think, must have found me a dull companion, for, as soon as the dance was over he hurried off to my mother, in whose charge he left me.

At one o'clock supper is served in one of the magnificent apartments adjoining the long corridor.

Supper over, the Royal hosts retire in procession as they came, and the guests leisurely take their departure.—London Answers.

Refined to absolute purity—sealed tight and protected from any possible contamination—

Redpath

Extra Granulated Sugar

in this new 5-Pound Package is the cleanset, purest sugar you can buy. Each Package contains 5 full pounds of sugar.

Ask your Grocer for it.

Canada Sugar Refining Co. Limited.

10

Good Meals at Camp Comfort

The boys at Camp Comfort are using the same stove that they had last year. It was the best they could get. It was a

New Perfection
WICK BLUE FLAME
Oil Cook-stove

This year they got a New Perfection Oven
Also a New Perfection Toaster
Also a New Perfection Broiler

"Gee, what a difference in the meals a good stove makes," said one of the boys. So they called their shack "Camp Comfort." And they will tell their mothers and wives about the stove, too. For the New Perfection Oil Cook-stove is as convenient for the home as for the camp. It will bake, broil, roast and toast as well as a regular coal range.

The New Perfection Stove

is handsomely finished in nickel, with cabinet top, drop shelves, towel racks, etc. Long chimneys, enameled turquoise-blue. Made with 1, 2 or 3 burners. All dealers. Free Cook-Book with every stove. Cook-Book also given to anyone sending 5 cents to cover mailing cost.

THE IMPERIAL OIL COMPANY, Limited
Winnipeg, Montreal, St. John, Halifax and Queen City Division, Toronto

Will you be one of the 108 farmers who will receive our Prize Contest checks?

THERE will be twelve cash prizes in each of the nine provinces (108 in all) in the 1912 Prize Contest for Canadian Farmers. The 1911 Contest was so successful in awakening interest in the use of Concrete on the farm, that a second contest, in which three times as many prizes are offered, was decided upon for this year.

The Contest this year is divided into three classes, "A," "B" and "C," and there will be four prizes in each class. (First prize, $50; Second prize, $25; Third prize, $15; Fourth prize, $10.)

Thus there are three $50 Prizes, three $25 Prizes, three $15 prizes, and three $10 Prizes, *for each province.*

DESCRIPTION OF CLASSES

In Each Class there will be First, Second, Third and Fourth Prizes ($50, $25, $15, and $10) for Each Province.

CLASS "A"—Prizes to be awarded to the four farmers in each province who use most "Canada" Cement on their farms in the year 1912.

CLASS "B"—Prizes to be awarded to the four farmers in each province who send photographs of the *best concrete work* done with "Canada" Cement on their farms in 1912.

CLASS "C"—Prizes to be awarded to the four farmers in each province who send in the best *description*, telling how any piece of concrete work was done with "Canada" Cement. (Entries for this prize must be accompanied by photographs of the work.)

Don't think that you must use a large quantity of cement in order to win a prize. The quantity of cement used does not count in Classes "B" and "C." Many of last year's prize winners used very little cement.

When you enter the Contest, you have a chanee to win a cash prize of $50 as well as the certainty that you will add a *permanent improvement* to your farm. If you haven't a copy, be sure and ask for our book, "What the Farmer Can Do With Concrete." It will not only suggest many improvements that you can use in entering the Contest, but will tell you all about the use of concrete on the farm.

Just write your name and address on the attached coupon, or use a postal card, and we will send full particulars of the Prize Contest and a copy of "What the Farmer Can Do With Concrete" to you absolutely free.

COUPON

CANADA CEMENT COMPANY LIMITED
Herald Building, Montreal

Please send me full particulars of the 1912 Farmers' Prize Contest, and a free copy of your book "What the Farmer Can Do With Concrete."

Name _____

Address _____

_____

Address Publicity Manager
Canada Cement Company Limited
30-35 Herald Bldg. - - Montreal